

The York Herald
ON THE
York
PAST AND PRESENT STATE

OF

INTRAMURAL BURYING PLACES,

WITH

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF

NATIONAL EXTRAMURAL CEMETERIES

SECOND EDITION.

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"No burying-places should be tolerated within cities or towns, much less in or about CHURCHES and CHAPELS. This custom is excessively injurious to the inhabitants, and especially to those who frequent public worship in such CHAPELS and CHURCHES. God, decency, and health forbid this shocking abomination." * * * From long observation I can attest that CHURCHES and CHAPELS situated in grave-yards, and those especially within whose walls the dead are interred, are perfectly unwholesome; and many, by attending such places, are shortening their passage to the house appointed for the living. What increases the iniquity of this abominable and deadly work is, that the burying-grounds attached to many CHURCHES and CHAPELS are made a source of PRIVATE GAIN. The whole of this preposterous conduct is as indecorous and unhealthy as it is profane. Every man should know that the gas which is disengaged from putrid flesh, and particularly from a human body, is not only unfriendly to, but destructive of, animal life. Superstition first introduced a practice which self-interest and covetousness continue to maintain."—DR. ADAM CLARKE'S Commentary on Luke vii., v. 12-15.

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1852.

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METROPOLITAN AND PROVINCIAL BURIAL-PLACES.

——— “ Here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding but to play at loggats with them? Mine ache to think on't.”—HAMLET.

“Death presses upon death; and, partly from the exhalations of those who have sickned, and partly from the corpses of those who have died, disease and contagion are propagated through the whole atmosphere of the affected area. And now, both the existence of fomites and the presence of the stricken have ceased to be the conditions of its propagation. The simple atmosphere drawn in as we breathe is in itself and of itself sufficient to destroy; and it destroys even those who have been removed with all care from the infected, provided only that their bodies be impregnated with the humours adapted to the receipt of the influence.”—Dr. SYDENHAM, *on the Pestilential Fever, and the Plague of the years 1665 and 1666.*

The moral and physical evils which result from the practice of intramural burial have been so fully exposed by me in various publications and in my evidence before Committees of the House of Commons, that any further insistance on these points would seem unnecessary.

But the failure of the Board of Health to carry into practice the important duties intrusted to it has re-opened the whole question, thrown us back from practice, upon theory, and rendered it incumbent on me to re-state very briefly the facts which demonstrate the enormous folly and wickedness of a system of which it is difficult to affirm whether its physical or its moral consequences are the most hideous, or the most destructive.

As I have frequently observed, nearly the whole question of intramural interment rests on the self-evident proposition that BULK MUST OCCUPY SPACE, and nearly all the evils attendant on the system arise from the necessity of finding room for unlimited bulk in a limited surface. A certain *space* of ground will contain a certain *bulk* (or number) of

bodies, living or dead, and no more. If you attempt to increase the number beyond a fixed limit you must necessarily displace a corresponding bulk; unless you be prepared to prove that two bodies can occupy the same place at the same time.

An acre of ground affords proper accommodation for the interment of 136 adult bodies *annually*. This proportion can never be exceeded for any length of time without rendering *inevitable* practices which violate our best feelings, and destroy and endanger life. In London the average number of interments to the acre is 426. Hence at the first glance we see that the parish grave-yards of the metropolis are *made to receive every year* THREE times as many bodies as they ought—and FOUR times as many as are permitted by the laws of well regulated continental states.

But this simple statement gives only an imperfect view of the condition of London grave-yards. Eight of the metropolitan parochial grounds are surcharged with more than one thousand bodies to the acre, *annually*.

To explain this more clearly a few remarks may be necessary.

The proper proportion of adult burials per acre for ten years is 1360. Yet there are receptacles for the dead in London, in which twenty-four times as many bodies are buried in the same space of ground as ought to be there buried. Now, if we suppose that the proportion of burials is brought down to its proper average, this can be done in two ways only.

The burial ground may be *enlarged*, or the time during which the body is allowed to remain in the ground may be diminished. But the extent of ground has not been increased, therefore the *time* must be diminished, and to establish the proper proportion it must be diminished to a

twenty-fourth, or five months, which are the twenty-fourth part of ten years.

This terrible fact, which comes home to every man's business and bosom, may be further illustrated by the following calculations:—

The number of superficial feet in an acre is 43,560. Hence we have merely to establish a simple rule and say if so many superficial feet are made to contain so many bodies, how many will 43,560 (the acre) contain.*

When we reflect that from fifteen to twenty times as many bodies as ought to be are daily deposited in many receptacles, that in some examples upwards of 20,000, in others beyond 50,000 have been disposed of in a single acre of ground—that dead bodies are corrupting—*within six inches† of the surface*, under every variation of temperature, every change of atmosphere, from dry to moist, from moist to dry; that myriads of dead, “piled one upon another (according to one eye-witness), like bricks,” are incessantly evolving many thousand times their own bulk of the most poisonous compounds, within a few feet of densely-crowded habitations—that the very ground is growing up around us, and houses disappearing beneath masses of corruption—we are compelled again and again to repeat that the entire system of grave-yard and vault management in this metropolis is an enormous and scandalous iniquity.

Can we wonder that disease is engendered or life destroyed by noxious emanations? We make for ourselves the poison which we breathe; in our perverse blindness we sow decay, and we reap death!

It is almost unnecessary for me—indeed, it would be im-

* For full information on these points see my work, “Interment and Disinterment.”

† Interment at a depth of six feet is not sufficient to prevent the escape of gases into the atmosphere.

possible to enumerate the varied injuries inflicted on the health of the living, by a practice which compels us to breathe, not the pure air of Heaven, but the poisonous compounds of our own corruption.

Death is rife, disease always prevalent in the vicinity of intramural burial places. Men accustomed to the work of grave-digging have been suddenly struck down by concentrated emanations from the dead. By a just retribution, the agents in the iniquity furnish, if not the greatest number of examples, yet, according to my experience, the most remarkable victims. We have numerous instances of grave-diggers, sextons, &c., being destroyed as it were by lightning. The poison which produces, when concentrated, such terrible consequences must necessarily give rise to various degrees of disorder or actual disease when administered in a more diluted form. This I have abundantly demonstrated. The effects vary according to the degree of dilution, on the one hand, and on the condition of health, or in other words, the resistance offered by the individual to its reception. It is in this simple, yet all-pervading truth, that we must seek the solution of a difficulty that has long puzzled the reflecting. We know as little what constitutes that mysterious power—the resistance to proved sources of disease in individual organisations, as we do of the animating or vital principle. If, however, we are yet profoundly ignorant “of what causes the heart to beat, the stomach to digest, the brain to think, the nerves to feel, and our active limbs to move,” facts have taught us that any cause which weakens the power of resistance, facilitates the action of miasmatic agencies, and that these agencies are most rife and most destructive in the neighbourhood of the receptacles of the dead. It is true the effects are often insidious, or mixed up with those arising from other, but infinitely less easily preventible causes of disease; and hence a few in-

terested parties were enabled to assert the wholesomeness of grave-yards, until the body of evidence which I accumulated became overwhelming, and reduced them to silence.

Amongst the slighter effects which have been *proved* to arise from residence in the vicinity of over-crowded burial-places I would enumerate eruptive diseases, headache, giddiness, disorders of the stomach, and bowel complaints of various kinds. The digestive organs are very soon deranged under the influence of the impure air respired, and a long catalogue of secondary mischiefs is the result. These maladies are too often attributed to other causes, but long experience and close observation force me emphatically to re-assert that the chief, the primary, the most easily removable cause of mischief is the proximity to human habitations of public and private burial places. This is shown to be the case by the fact that removal from the poisonous localities is soon followed by restoration to health, and that no amount of medical skill can benefit the patient so long as he breathes the products of his deceased neighbour, who is often buried under his back parlour windows, or, as has happened, beneath his own kitchen floor.

Can we doubt, then, that instances of sudden death, malignant fevers of various kinds, assuming forms not to be found elsewhere—typhus fever, that scourge of crowded cities, cholera, consumption, and many other fatal disorders, likewise prevail more frequently and with increased intensity wherever crowded grave-yards abound?

The commission sent to Egypt by the French Government in 1828, to inquire into the cause of the plague, was forced to the conclusion *that the development of this dreadful malady mainly depends on the constitution of the GRAVE-YARDS*, and on the mode of sepulture employed in that country. In ancient Egypt the plague was unknown; although densely populated, the health of the inhabitants was pre-

served by strict attention to sanitary regulations. But with time came on change, and that change was in man. The serene climate, the enriching river, the fruitful soil remained; but when the experience of 2,000 years was set at nought, when the precautions previously adopted for preserving the soil from accumulated impurities were neglected, when the sepulchral rites of civilised Egypt were exchanged for the modern but barbarous practices of interment, when the land of mummies became, as it now is, one vast charnel-house, the seed which was sown brought forth its bitter fruit, and from dangerous innovations came the most deadly pestilence. (See the Fourth of a Series of Lectures on the Actual Condition of the Metropolitan Grave-yards.)

The moral evils resulting from intramural sepulture equal, if not surpass, the physical. They disgrace and degrade us to the lowest rank of civilised beings. They teach the sad, the humiliating truth, that the holiest of feelings are openly trampled on in this land which boasts so loudly of its Christianity, and that abuses of the most revolting kind are winked at and tolerated for the sake of gain.

Why are the resting-places of the dead daily violated? Why have those most closely connected with such outrages eyes, yet they see not — ears, yet they will not hear? These questions I may perhaps be forced to answer at another time; for the present it may suffice to enumerate a few of the enormities which have passed before me.

The simple, unsuspecting man who wanders about this huge metropolis, and sees here and there a wretched-looking patch of ground, thickly studded with grave-stones intended to perpetuate memories in the midst of a population whose energetic bustle and activity contrasts mournfully and painfully with the desecrated places past which

the human tide is incessantly surging and rushing, as though the last day of its existence were at hand, may well and wisely enquire, "Where do they bury their dead? how do they find room for them all?" Let the following facts be his answer:—

The bodies of the dead are crowded into every inch of available space, and when room no longer exists it is made by an unceremonious expulsion of the former occupants. In plain words—the dead are "committed" to the earth, but they do not remain there. In the eye of the law violation of the grave is a *felony*. In the opinion of medical judges on this question, a conclave of evil spirits leagued together to destroy the spiritual by depraving the physical man, could not, in the exercise of their utmost cunning and malignity, compound more subtle or more sure poisons than those elaborated day and night in the vaults, cellars, and receptacles for the dead in this metropolis. In order to render the work of poisoning more sure, myriads of bodies, in every stage of decomposition, have been, and continue to be, stowed away in subterranean receptacles in the streets, lanes, and blind alleys in this metropolis, situated in the very midst of the habitations of two millions and a half of people. Whilst in the majority of the so-called grave-yards every foot of ground has been occupied—re-occupied and re-employed—until the very soil, compounded as it is of human remains, constitutes, in the warm season more especially, vast hot-beds of pestilential infection. But even in these saturated and disgusting depositories—disgusting both to sight and smell—the dead are not allowed to remain for any length of time. Money is to be procured—space *must* be found for successive new tenants, whilst the late ones, often years before their right of tenancy has expired, are ejected by processes which, though I have elsewhere fully exposed, I will here very briefly indicate. Sometimes the clearing-out

is wholesale. At the "Cross-Bones" burying-ground, in Southwark, the "Irish Corner" was cleared of 1,000 bodies at one sweep. Generally speaking, the nefarious work goes on more gradually, though not always silently: for during many years, persons, whose necessities have compelled them to reside in the neighbourhood of such places, have been aroused from sleep in the dead of night by the noise occasioned by breaking up coffins recently deposited.

In other localities the remains of the dead have been carted out in loads, and shot down as "rubbish" upon waste grounds, or used for "filling in." Some of our viaducts have been constructed on rubbish obtained by this unchristian process.

The more usual method, however, consists in simply cutting through the half-decomposed bodies and coffins, with instruments made for the purpose.

The grave is dug *through* the corpses of the pre-deceased. This horrible violation of the dead body takes place more or less in all the London grave-yards (Appendix A), and often gives rise to the most distressing scenes. The ends of justice have been defeated by it; the coroner being unable to find a recently interred body; while on the contrary, relatives and friends have found on the surface, or have witnessed the exposure in the so-called grave, of portions of the bodies of those whom, but a short time previously, they had followed in sorrow to their "last home." Other circumstances prove that the violation is systematic—constant. The coffin-wood often serves as fuel for, and is given away to, the poor in large quantities by grave-yard officials, and from the horrible stench which sometimes accompanies the combustion, there is no doubt that *fire* is one of the means employed for effectually removing incumbrances. In one notorious place, indeed, the fire was kept up with very brief and accidental interruptions—day and night—for more than

a quarter of a century. Each man's coffin was employed to consume the contents of his neighbour's. A minor degree of violation consists in clearing out what are called "bone holes." The fleshy portion of the human body, or the greater part thereof, is, as I have proved, rapidly destroyed by artificial agencies, after which, in some instances, the bones are disposed of to "bone crushers," or stowed away in large pits

The latter are evacuated from time to time. An eye-witness counted 500 skulls, which were thus "cleared out" in a single day.

Every sense of religion, as well as of decency, seems extinct in the persons engaged in this degrading occupation. They often assume the outer garb of clergymen, and "perform" the funeral service—thus outraging religion, and collecting money under false pretences. A traffic in second-hand wooden coffins—coffin handles—plates—cloth, &c., is often carried on by those to whom the care of the receptacles for the dead is entrusted, under the present system. Nay, more, the leaden coffins of the more wealthy classes have not escaped. In one memorable case it was proved that ten tons of lead from the vaults of a certain church had been sold, and the proceeds handed over to the churchwardens. How low must moral feeling have fallen when such conduct remains un-reproved? (B)

Finally, a strong suspicion exists that in many cases the dead never reach their last home. This must be considered as the *acme* of the system. It saves not only the cost of interment, but it prevents the necessity of "clearing out." Our authority on this mysterious point is the rector of Bishopsgate. 1,244 persons had died in the parish, within a certain time. Of these 795 were buried in the parish, nine in the cemeteries; the remainder, 440, could be found nowhere. They were gone, but not "in the church-yard

laid!" They were poor, and never inquired after—apparently of less value than the missing penny in the balance-sheet of a banker. The above is but a small item in our account with intramural sepulture. Sufficient, however, has been said to demonstrate its destructive consequences to the people's health, and its degrading influence on the moral character of all connected with it. Self-interest and self-respect imperatively require a remedy, for we can no longer remain between the unpleasant alternative of being plundered by the living, or poisoned by the dead.

If the prediction published in 1839, continuously enforced and supported, as it has since been, by the most startling and astounding evidence, was at that period justifiable, how much more loudly and earnestly may I repeat my warnings and denunciations in the beginning of the year 1852? With how much louder a voice may not the humble pioneer of that day again exclaim, "I am so fully convinced of the necessity for *legislative interference* to destroy the present dangerous system of inhumation, that I hesitate not to express my opinion that the *Government* of the country will ultimately be driven to the adoption of means for ENFORCING THE PROHIBITION OF INTERMENT IN THE VICINITY OF THE LIVING." (Vide "Gatherings from Grave-yards.") The numerous and startling facts contained in the above named work at once excited public attention. Many of my statements were received with incredulity, but as time wore on and the public and parliamentary mind became, degree by degree, saturated with the proofs, all except the interested, the prejudiced, or the unreflecting, were convinced that *this* sanitary reform, which lies at the root of all other sanitary reforms, could no longer be delayed. Yet it was delayed by the opposition of interested parties, and on the plea of vested rights, and it required an agitation, constantly kept up during many years before my prediction was fulfilled,

and the great and important question "WHERE SHALL WE BURY OUR DEAD?" was attempted to be answered by an Act which proposed "to make better provision for the interment of the dead IN (?) and near the metropolis." This bill was carried by the largest majorities of the session against the energetic, and earnest protestations of several of the peoples' representatives, and received the Royal assent on the 5th August, 1850.

Many of those who had opposed us in 1842—casting morality behind them and denying the most elementary principles of sanitary reform.—came round at the eleventh hour. They became converts to a doctrine in order to direct a movement. They succeeded, even beyond their expectations. The Church secured by the Act of Parliament of 1850 a compensation amounting in the *present* population of the metropolis to some £40,000 per annum. This sum was accorded in *perpetuity*, not for the care of the living flock, but for permission to inter elsewhere its inanimate carcass. (C)

The awakening intelligence of the age is rapidly discovering that surrounding *physical* circumstances play a large and most important part in man's moral and physical condition. Although it is not possible to drive the ploughshare over whole districts, in which disease, misery, destitution, and death, go hand in hand—although it is not in the power of legislation, forthwith, to better the social condition of thousands—here and elsewhere; although we cannot, I repeat, at once displace entire populations, until other and better sanitary provisions be made for them, yet the slightest reflection is sufficient to convince us that the practice of mingling, *compounding*, as I have said, the remains of the dead with the living, ought not to have been permitted, nay, encouraged and defended, until this, the nineteenth century, in Christian England. Yet this practice

has still its advocates, nay, its eulogists. Facts, however, too notorious to be longer denied, and proofs of mischiefs resulting, too numerous and too terrible to be overlooked, brought entire conviction to the minds of the people—in the year 1849. I hesitate not to declare that a *large* proportion of the 68,432 persons who perished in London in that year were sent prematurely to their last account.

And what was the condition of matters—what were our municipal, our parochial, our governmental arrangements or provisions during the existence of the most destructive epidemic of modern times? Why, during a period of general consternation and alarm, the bodies of those who were slain by the pestilence were deposited in the so-called burial-places of this metropolis in spaces utterly incapable of receiving, as I had years since proved, the ordinary mortality, amounting to some 52,000 per annum. Yet between 2,000 and 3,000 bodies were deposited weekly (not buried, be it remembered, for that term would be a misnomer) in and under the streets of London during the prevalence of the *cholera*—the *mort de chien*, or the dog's death, as it is very properly called; and this iniquitous, this abominable and deadly work, was persisted in during the whole of that terrible time; persisted in in defiance, nay, in utter contempt, of the most sincere and the most energetic protestations of the Society* of which I have the honour to be the President (D.); in spite of the continuous complaints, the urgent remonstrances, and the denunciations of the press. During many weeks this unequal, this murderous battle was fought by the inhabitants of London—fought, be it always remembered, with an invisible, a non-tangible enemy. This beleaguered city was attacked, not by forces from without, but by enemies within—enemies whom cupidity and superstition

* The National Society for the Abolition of Burial in Towns.

had furnished with the most destructive weapons. So far as my researches have informed me on the question, the world's history does not furnish the parallel to such unbounded folly and desperate wickedness. Whilst men were falling right and left, struck, too, as they were, in many instances, on the very edge of the grave to which they had accompanied the remains of a relative or friend, still the solemn farce of thrusting weekly thousands of dead bodies into places long since filled to repletion was played out.

The Cholera of 1849, however, gave the last blow—the Cholera rang the passing-bell of the intramural burial abomination. Constantly recurring cases of typhus fever, consumptions, apoplexies, sudden deaths, measles, scarlet fever, small pox, and last, though most important of all, perhaps, *that slower poisoning which lowers the vitality and impairs the stamina of the entire nation*, would not, perhaps, all put together, have carried the conviction of the wrong and the determination to enforce the remedy.

We are about to cross the threshold of a long closed door, and to establish for the first time in this country sanitary principles of the utmost value and importance. The PREVENTIVE SERVICE of medicine has yet to be organised—let that be honestly and unflinchingly done, and the weekly returns of the Registrar General will soon indicate the value of the hackneyed truism that “prevention is better than cure.”

The duty of carrying into effect the provisions of the “Metropolitan Interments Bill” was intrusted to the Board of Health. That body has now been engaged for the last eighteen months, and what has been the result of its “labours?” Nothing—nay, worse than nothing; for not only have the evils of intramural sepulture remained unremedied, but the vigilance of the people has been lulled, and, practically speaking, things are now in a

worse state than in 1850, when a solemn vote of the Legislature pronounced them intolerable. Since August, 1850, the receptacles of this metropolis have received some 70,000 additional bodies. It is unnecessary for me to inquire into the causes which have given rise to the failure—for practical purposes the Board of Health has ceased to exist. We have, it is true, a bill which professes to forbid the system of interring the dead in the midst of the living, but we have not advanced a single step towards our object. We have rather receded from it. Our progress, as Mr. Hume used to say, has been a "backward" one. Every day our over-crowded burial places are becoming more over-crowded still. We are heaping the dead of to-day on the bones and amidst the decomposing flesh and tissues of our forefathers. A large proportion of our population, begotten in corruption—born in corruption—brought up in corruption—live in corruption—die in the midst of, are prematurely slain by corruption—and are buried in corruption, again to become the producers of corruption in others—and are thus made the creators of poison and the producers of disease.

Such a condition of things cannot be tolerated. Our work is to be done over again, but it is no longer the act of an individual. The people are now, I trust, sufficiently enlightened on the subject. Let them put their shoulder to the wheel, and the "cart" will move forward, however weighty the obstacle, however old the incumbrance; for however we may boast of the progress which has been made in the political and social conditions of this country, it is a well-known fact that no great measure of improvement was ever carried until the people took it seriously up, and insisted on its adoption.

This remark applies with peculiar force to the question of intramural sepulture.

If a man neglects his own business, it is seldom properly done by others. Intramural sepulture is essentially the business of the people, for by it is the people's health chiefly endangered, and the people's best feelings inhumanly outraged.

My feelings upon this point are so strong, that I am unwilling to give them expression. The time for renewed action has arrived.

To the Press I need not appeal. It has done its duty in the most noble and disinterested manner. It will continue to agitate until this great work be accomplished. To the people I would say, neither bury nor permit burials in the present fearfully overcharged receptacles, but *insist on the instant closure of all intramural burying places*; for they may be assured—judging from the terrible lessons of the past, and looking to the pressing exigencies of the future—that is the first requirement in this great reformation.

I have thought it advisable, in issuing a second edition of this work, to give, however briefly, an outline of the enormities of the present system, whilst indicating the remedy and its mode of application. To the latter objects the following observations are principally directed.

In all large cities, especially in London, the expenses of intramural sepulture press most heavily on the poorer classes. Hence, the dead are often kept, before burial, for an almost incredible period in the midst of the living. I brought this point prominently before Parliament in my petition in 1842, and demonstrated before the select committees of 1840 and 1842 two great requirements of the age,* viz., more enlightened, more comprehensive

*See my evidence specially referred to in the Report of the Select Committee, appointed "to inquire into the Circumstances affecting the

views as to the position and structural arrangements of the dwellings for the living, and more especially as to the mode and expense of transit, and the *selection of localities* for the INTERMENT OF THE DEAD.

Competent and credible witnesses have deposed, that the poorer classes are sometimes compelled to keep their deceased relatives for three weeks, before they can collect the sum necessary for the most humble ceremonial, and during this time the health and moral condition of the survivors are subject to a variety of most injurious influences.

Under the present system, indeed, exorbitant charges for the interment of the dead in cities are inevitable.

In the present brief remarks I cannot enter into details. It must suffice to state that Parliamentary witnesses have shown that the expense of an ordinary funeral, for a person of the middle class, is from £50 to £70; for an artizan, £5 to £10; for the absolutely poor, 13s., and this does not include ground or burial fees.

The money expended for interments in London during the year does not fall much short of ONE MILLION of pounds sterling. The annual expense for Great Britain has been calculated at FIVE MILLIONS sterling. This sum, nearly equal to the revenue raised under the poor-law, is largely derived from those to whom reduced charges, regulated by a *fixed* tariff, for the burial of their dead, would be a great, and, in more senses than one, an invaluable boon.

There are two classes of persons—the claimant and the non-claimant, destitute—the one receiving parochial relief, the other, whose patient endurance and unsubdued independence have supported, during many years, an unequal

Health of the Inhabitants of Large Towns and Populous Districts, with a view to Improved Sanitary Regulations for their Benefit." 1840. See also my evidence before the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the "Effects of Interment of Bodies." 1842.

struggle against adversity, and its last resource—the work-house.

Now, it is the duty, as I trust it will be the determination, of those in authority, to take especial care that, *at the lowest possible cost*, an appropriate and solemn transmission, and a “last home,” should be accorded to these, the poorest of our brethren. Nay, more, in the case of meritorious and deserving individuals who have not been claimants of parochial relief, and who may have exhausted, during the exigencies of a long illness, their independent resources, I would suggest that a provision should be made by the Government for affording them, under the certificate of duly authorised persons—medical attendants, or others—the gratuitous means of interment, under class seven.* Such an arrangement would bring comfort and aid to numbers, at a time when, of all others, it would be most seasonable, and most required.

If, however, the Legislature forbid the practice of interment in towns, it is the duty of Government to carry out the law, by providing an efficient system of extramural sepulture, suited to the feelings and requirements of the entire community.

A GENERAL ACT for the establishment of cemeteries should at once be passed. Every City, Town, and I may add, very many Villages, in the United Kingdom, require suburban cemeteries. Any inquiry as to *effects*, viz., deteriorated health, premature death, and the poisoning of water from grave-yards, which I have proved follow as a matter of course, is not only unnecessary, but a waste of time and money. All that is required is, to determine as to the *condition of the soil* and the *site* of the projected cemetery. Every facility ought to be afforded by the Legislature, and every unnecessary obstruction removed.

* Vide p. 26.

Separate acts of Parliament, more especially when opposition is offered, involve often a great outlay of money, and an expenditure of time, which might be much better employed. Cemeteries ought *not* to be in the hands of joint-stock companies. They ought to be NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, vested in corporate or town authorities, or managed by committees elected by the rate-payers, subject to the supervision of a general authority, free from local feelings and prejudices. Private speculations in burials, or any such ownership, ought never to have been permitted. I am aware that there are persons who approve of joint-stock cemeteries and who disapprove of a compulsory act for the prevention of intramural burial. Yet, only three acts for the formation of joint-stock cemeteries were obtained in the year 1846 !

It seems to me highly improper to leave a reform like this to *local* efforts, and then to saddle such efforts with immense fees, extracted, it is true, in the first instance from the pockets of public-spirited individuals, who, in one instance, to my knowledge, believed that they had *given* rather than invested. Besides, the money so unnecessarily expended must be repaid (principal and interest) in the shape of increased "fees," by the friends of the deceased who may be buried in such cemeteries.

The different cemeteries in the hands of companies around London should be purchased from the shareholders, who should be equitably and even liberally treated with, and as they are situated in localities towards which dwellings have already approached or may be expected to approach, they should be stringently regulated, with a view to their being closed, before they, in turn, become nuisances. (E)

For the above paramount reasons I am decidedly of opinion that Government, under the change contemplated, should take on itself the charge of organising and adminis-

tering, or rigidly supervising, a general plan for the interment of the dead throughout Great Britain.

It is not necessary that the Government should convert itself into a body of undertakers and assume the responsibility of interring every person that dies in this metropolis, but it should organise in the first instance, and then entrust the duty of supervision to competent persons, responsible to and holding office under it.

Let us now consider, generally, how this may best be done, confining our remarks, for obvious reasons, to London.

The annual mortality of London is about 56,000, or 154 per day, and as each body should be allowed to remain ten years in the grave for complete decomposition, we have to provide for 560,000 bodies.

I have shown elsewhere* that an acre of ground will give SANITARY burial to 136 adults, annually, and no more. On this calculation, 412 acres of land would be required outside the city, but as this implies the most economical distribution, we may calculate on 500 acres, at least, being necessary; for a certain space will be required for mortuary receptacles, previous to interment—chapels, monuments, tombs,—waiting-rooms for mourners, visitors, and residences for the officers of the establishments, who must reside in the immediate locality of the cemetery.

As I have many years since proved that burial in vaults, in coffins lined with lead, is most injurious in its consequences, the Legislature should prohibit the practice of depositing dead bodies in vaults, or catacombs—more especially under the pavement of the chapels in which the mortuary service is performed; or, if at all permitted, in deference to existing feelings or prejudices, the practice should be discouraged, as

* Lecture iv. p.5, "On the Actual Condition of the Metropolitan Grave-yards."

much as possible, by the imposition of a heavy pecuniary charge.

The proposition to establish "METROPOLITAN PAROCHIAL BURIAL-GROUNDS" in the vicinity of London, made by a committee appointed at a meeting of several of the Metropolitan Clergy on the 23rd day of December, 1847, cannot be entertained, because the re-creation of "PAROCHIAL BURIAL-GROUNDS" would neither meet the pressing necessities of the case, nor satisfy the demands of the public.

In this Report it is stated, that "the expense of the purchase, enclosure, and laying out of about 150 acres for burial-grounds would, according to the calculations laid before the committee, amount to about £180,000."

"It would require," says the Report, "for the purpose of the *perpetual* interment of the dead of the metropolis, not less than 646 acres of land!" therefore, if, as is proposed, 150 acres of land, buildings, &c., are to cost £180,000, a sum of about £800,000 sterling would be required.

This, I conceive, would be an unnecessary, and therefore an unjustifiable expenditure of public money, as I shall now endeavour to show.

A celebrated heathen philosopher would not permit fields fit for tillage to be employed for purposes of inhumation; and it would be difficult, I think, to produce a valid objection to the appropriation of comparatively valueless common lands, in the neighbourhood of London, for such a purpose. More especially as there are large available tracts of such and in the immediate vicinity of the railways, admirably adapted, both as to soil and site, and sufficiently capacious to receive the dead of this metropolis for many centuries to come.

The South-Western Railway runs through a vast tract, —Woking Common. There are other localities which will readily present themselves; for example, on the Eastern

Counties line, High-beach and Wanstead-flats. The Surrey side of the river affords peculiar advantages for the erection of MORTUARY stations,—as the Nine-elms,—also approachable by the River Thames, and the now unused (excepting for goods transit) South-Eastern branch line of the Bricklayer's Arms station.

Let those who may object to the apparent boldness of this scheme reflect that railways offer the readiest, and by far the most economical, mode of conveyance; that the necessity is urgent, nay, imperative; that the change would effect an incalculable sanitary and moral reformation; whilst the appropriation of land, as I have said, comparatively valueless, would be a wise and prudent measure, in anticipation of the prospective requirements of a vastly increasing population. These cemeteries should be open to all; without distinction of class or creed. They should be in the strictest sense of the term, *general* or NATIONAL CEMETERIES. They might be placed, where practicable, between lines of rail, branch lines, or sidings, conveying the funeral train into the cemetery itself. RECEPTION HOUSES, as I have said, would be required at both extremities of the line. Under certain circumstances it might be necessary to remove bodies to the cemetery some days previous to interment, and accommodation would be required for mourners, robing rooms, and other purposes.

It has been proposed to erect a number of mortuary houses for the temporary reception of the dead previous to burial. The objects of such arrangements are, to avoid the danger of premature interment, and to relieve the poorer classes from the necessity of retaining the corpse in their crowded habitations for a prolonged period before burial.

The latter object is certainly a most desirable one; but

it may be questioned how far the advantages may compensate the increased expense of such buildings.

As to the danger of premature interment, it may be obviated by the appointment of special officers, whose duty it shall be to ascertain and verify the fact of death, and without whose certificate no corpse shall be removed for burial. These officers must be medical men: and modern science enables them to ascertain, without a shadow of doubt, whether or not life has become extinct. The office might be conjoined with that of "registrar of births and deaths," and in this way a staff of competent officers might be obtained at a moderate cost. For many reasons, I do not think that they should interfere with the service of the administration; nor do I think that the dignity of the medical profession admits of its being mixed up with the calling of an undertaker.

It appears to me, that all the expenses of the national system would not only be abundantly covered by the receipts, but that a large and an increasing surplus must accrue. Even with a most liberal expenditure, we shall still have an economy of 50 per cent. on the present system.

Having thus provided resting-places for our dead, and indicated an excellent mode of transit, which would, in my opinion, satisfy in the fullest manner the moral and religious feelings of survivors, let us examine whether these objects can be fulfilled without an extravagant expenditure. Here, as in all other affairs, we must be guided by experience, and as we have no practical experience of our own, we must turn to that of other countries. Paris, for its size, wealth, importance, and population, is the only European capital which can be compared to London; although its population be no more than 1,000,000 and the annual mortality about 29,000.

The number of metropolitan cemeteries is five; and they comprise an extent of 115 acres, but are insufficient. A very

extensive piece of ground has been recently walled in, as a supplement to Montmartre, on the northern side of that cemetery.

Every thing connected with the interment of the dead is performed by single administration, denominated "service des Pompes Funebres," which acts under a contract with the Government. Persons dying in the hospitals, or in the Hotel des Invalides, and not claimed by their friends, are buried at the expense of these several establishments.

The Indigent are buried gratuitously by the administration, on certificate from the mayor of the municipal district of the deceased.

The bodies of persons, one remove from the above class, are interred under what is called the "ordinary service" of the administration. This comprises a hearse, drawn by two black horses: there are also four bearers, a coachman, and a superior attendant, all respectably clothed in black; a coffin likewise, covered by a black pall.

The expense of this funeral is £1. 1s. 8d. to £1. 3s. 6d.; but of this sum the administration receives only 11s. 6d., viz., 5s. 9d. for cost of transport, and 5s. 9d. for coffin. The remainder goes to the corporation of the city. About one-third of the entire burials take place under this head.

The religious ceremony connected with the "ordinary service" is very simple, and performed gratuitously by the clergy.

The "extraordinary service" is divided into nine classes, to each of which is annexed a tariff, or printed scale of charges. The scale of each class is most comprehensive, and a selection may be made from it, according to the requirements or tastes of those who order the funeral. Thus the whole of the service, and articles enumerated under any given class, may be ordered, or the order may be simply

confined to the hearse and coffin; but when a selection of a particular class has been made, parties must confine themselves to the tariff of that class, and not mix the others with it.

The following is the scale of charges under each class, reduced to English money. Each sum total, however, must be increased by 15s. for adults, and 8s. 2d. for children, the tax on burials to defray expenses of transport, and also by the price of the coffins, which vary from £22. to 17s. 6d., according to the materials and lining. On the other hand, it should be remarked, that the sum total for each class is the *maximum* which the law allows to be expended, though orders for this maximum are hardly ever given, and that the "anniversary religious service," which increases the expense about one fourth, is seldom required, except by the families of the rich.

	1st Class.	2nd Class.	3rd Class.	4th Class.	5th Class.	6th Class.	7th Class.	8th Class.	9th Class.	Ordinary Service.
	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.	s.	
Religious Service.	24 10	18 5	11 5	8 5	5 10	2 5	1 0	0 15	11	Gratis.
Undertaker's Service.	94 0	83 0	49 5	22 10	14 0	5 3	3 0	2 7	4	11 8
Total . . .	118 10	101 5	60 10	30 15	19 10	7 8	4 0	3 2	15	
Anniversary Religious Services.	26 0	20 15	12 0	8 15	6 5	2 10				
General Total	144 10	121 0	72 10	39 10	25 15	9 18	4 0	3 2	15	11 8

A glance at the above table shows, that the cost of interments varies from £120 to 15s., and from the total of each class about 1-5th may be deducted for services not required in the orders given. The 6th and 7th classes are those under which the greater number of interments takes place, and it may be calculated that about £120,000 are annually expended for the interment of 25,000 bodies.

With such moderate charges it might be supposed that the funerals under each class are conducted in what we would call here a "shabby manner." This is far from being the case. The religious portion of the ceremony is conducted with a degree of pomp and solemnity unknown in Protestant England, and the remaining portion comprises more than enough to satisfy the most fastidious. The first-class funeral, for example, includes ornamental mourning of the church and house of the deceased in magnificent style, a hearse with 4 horses, 18 mourning coaches, 2 curates, 4 vicars, 50 priests, 12 professional singers for the grand mass, 22 chorister boys, 4 instrumental performers, and an accessory service of surpassing pomp. In fact, every portion of the service, in all classes, is conducted in a most satisfactory manner; but the mode of interment of paupers and unclaimed bodies would not, certainly, be suited to the increasing requirements of English feeling.

The arrangements of classes and tariffs will require great consideration.

Now on the above scale, and making the most ample allowance for difference of prices and transport in the two countries, the following tariff may be deduced for England; it is offered, however, as what may possibly be done, rather than as a definite arrangement:—

	£	s.	d.
Parish poor, to be paid by the several parishes or unions to administration	0	12	0
7th class	1	0	0
6th class	2	0	0
5th class	6	0	0
4th class	10	0	0
3rd class	25	0	0
2nd class	45	0	0
1st class £150 to 200	0	0	0

These charges, much more equitable and reasonable than the present, would give an annual sum of about £300,000, for the interment of the dead of the metropolis.

The present cost of interments is fully £800,000 per annum for the metropolis. Under the reformed system it will not exceed £350,000, being a difference of £450,000 per annum in favour of the latter. This alone is an important consideration. Indeed, when experience shall have given practical knowledge of the best mode of working out the national system, I feel persuaded that it will be possible to diminish the expense of funerals for the working classes and artisans without detracting from the proper discharge of the duties connected with the interment of the dead and the due solemnity of the service. It must be remembered that the Parisian tariff is not based on the cheaper mode of funeral railway trains, so admirably adapted for London, but necessitates the more costly means of transit by coach and hearse.

To sum up, I would propose:—

1. That a general system of extramural sepulture shall be forthwith organised throughout Great Britain; and that the management be placed under the municipal authorities, or committees chosen by the rate-payers, controlled by a superintending authority appointed by Government.

2. That medical men be appointed to fill the ancient office of "seareher," and that no body be removed for interment without a certificate of the cause and fact of death.

3. That interment of the dead during the summer quarters within a period of — days be compulsory

4. That for London, Common (and, if possible, Crown) lands in the neighbourhood of railways should be appropriated for GENERAL CEMETERIAL purposes—sidings or branch lines conveying the funeral trains into the ground itself, as proposed by me to the Select Committee on Interment in Towns in 1842.

5. That the afternoons of Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday in each week be appropriated for the purpose (F). That on

the alternate days, special trains may, if required, be provided.

6. That a central administration be appointed to undertake every service (except the religious) connected with the burial of the dead at *fixed and specified charges*, which latter, however, shall not exceed certain *maxima* laid down therein.

7. That the duty of providing for the interment of the dead be exclusively confined to the aforementioned administration.

Under the above system the dead might be reverently buried; the physical and moral standard of our people greatly elevated, whilst the poorest would be assured of a secure "last resting place," which under the existing order of things, has long been impossible.

The advantages arising from a fixed scale will be at once apparent to the least reflective. The cost of what is termed "a respectable walking or carriage funeral" varies from ten up to hundreds of pounds; and it is unfortunately the case, that an expenditure is too frequently incurred, under the pressure of bereavements, which taxes most severely the means of survivors, or plunges them in difficulties which, to my knowledge, often involves a forced and ruinous sacrifice of their property.

The numerous and valuable class of our population, which a wise paternal government should carefully protect, and which has the greatest claim upon its sympathies and assistance, would be enabled, under a tariff (fixed as low as possible), to select from the various classes of funerals the one best adapted to their circumstances.

Under a general system, and with a single administration, I feel convinced that interments can be conducted according to the above tariff in a much more respectable and satisfactory manner than at present; and if the Legislature—completing its work—shall institute a National

administration for the interment of the dead, beyond the abodes of man, this great question will be solved in a manner alike conformable to the dignity and the interests of the nation.

G. A. W.

ST. JAMES'S PLACE, ST. JAMES'S STREET

April, 1852.

A P P E N D I X.

(A.) Those who desire detailed proofs of this assertion will find them in my various publications. The following extract from my petition to the House of Commons in February, 1842, will satisfy the reader that I was then fully informed on the condition of intramural burial places in the provinces:—

“That from sources of information on which your Petitioner has the fullest reliance, he is convinced that the evils arising from the present system of interment are not confined to the metropolis, but exist in a proportionate degree in the cities and populous towns throughout the kingdom, and in some of the dependencies of the British Empire.”

(B.) Mr. Joseph George, the churchwarden of St. Ann's, Soho, who has peculiarly distinguished himself by his long continued and energetic opposition to the practice of intramural burials, informs me, as these sheets are passing through the press, that St. Ann's has been used as a burying place during 160 years, and that up to this period 110,240 bodies have been there disposed of, in a space of little more than half an acre, being at the rate of 1,000 to the acre annually, instead of 136. During the above-named period 1,920 leaden coffins have been placed in these vaults, and there are only 490 remaining—so that 1,430 have been abstracted. At p. 203 of the “GATHERINGS FROM GRAVE YARDS” will be found a reference to a “clearing out” of the vaults which had been made some time previous to the publication of my work in 1839.

(C.) And be it enacted, that to compensate incumbents² for loss of fees the said board shall, in respect of the burial within the consecrated part of any burial ground provided under this act of any body removed from any parish within the district (save where such body is buried at the expense of any union or parish), pay to a separate account to be kept by the treasurer of the said board, to be called “the Burial Service and Incumbents Compensation Fund,” the sum of six shillings and two pence, and where such body is buried at the expense of any union or parish a sum not exceeding one shilling, and the board shall, out of the monies paid to the said account, pay the salaries of all the chaplains of the said board, and shall apply the residue of such monies, so far as the same will extend, in payment to the incumbent of every parish within the district in which interment is discontinued under this act an annuity during his incumbency of such an amount as the board, with the approbation of the commissioners of her Majesty's treasury, shall fix as a just compensation for the loss of receipts in respect of burials to be calculated on the average of the receipts in respect of burials by the incumbents of such parish during the five years next before the passing of this act; and no incumbent shall be entitled, under any act of Parliament or otherwise, to any payment, save as herein provided, in respect of any interment under this act in any cemetery purchased by the said board, or in respect of the removal of any body previously interred to any burial ground provided under this act: Provided always, that it shall be lawful for the commissioners of her Majesty's treasury from time to time, upon any vacancy in the incumbency of any such parish, to reduce the amount of the annuity to be thenceforth payable as aforesaid to the incumbent of such parish, in case it appears to them, having regard to the duties of such incumbent, and the value of the living, independently of any annuity under this act, just and expedient so to do; and the surplus, if any,

from time to time of the monies paid to the said account, after satisfying all the purposes aforesaid, may, with the approbation of one of her Majesty's principal secretaries of state and of the bishop of the diocese, be applied by the said board in augmentation of the incomes of the incumbents or ministers of any new parishes, district parishes, or district chapelries formed within the several parishes from which such surplus may have arisen, and as near as may be according to the proportions in which such several parishes may have contributed to such surplus: Provided always, that no income shall be augmented under this provision so as to exceed three hundred pounds a year.

The next clause, 33, provides compensation to "clerks" and "sextons" for the loss of fees and sums now received in respect of interments," and as the calculation is to be based on a yearly average during the five years ending on the day of the passing of the Act, and as the mortality during those five years has been steadily and alarmingly indicative of the advent of a retribution, which, though long mercifully deferred, may, and most probably will, overtake us at last—the time selected for and the nature of the "compensation" may or may not have been well and wisely chosen. Time, which proves all things, will in this, as in other matters, be his own demonstrator.

(D.) NATIONAL CEMETERIES.—The following is a copy of the petition presented to the House of Commons by Mr. Mackinnon, M.P. :—"To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled, the humble petition of the President and Members of the National Society for the Abolition of Burial in Towns, sheweth, that it was clearly demonstrated before a Committee of your Honourable House in the year 1840, and, more fully before the Special Committee appointed to inquire into 'THE EFFECT OF INTERMENT OF BODIES' in 1842, that the burial of the dead in the midst of the living is a practice fraught with the most disastrous consequences. That your petitioners would remind your Honourable House, that during the prevalence of epidemic cholera, in the metropolis, the remains of between 2,000 and 3,000 persons, who had perished from pestilence, were deposited, weekly, in places long since incapable of giving decent, much less sanitary, burial to a single body. That it has long been a matter of common and scandalous notoriety, that the bodies of the dead are disposed of so as to produce incalculable injury to the public health, and the public morals. That during the prevalence of a pestilential disease, which your petitioners believe was, in many instances, clearly traceable to the practice, which they call upon your Honourable House to arrest, the bodies of the dead were deposited in streets and thoroughfares, under and around churches, chapels, and human habitations—in the very midst of two millions of the inhabitants of the metropolis. That, utterly regardless of repeated warnings and predicted consequences, the bodies of the dead have been, and continue to be, placed one upon another and side by side, in deep pits; whilst thousands of others have been, and continue to be deposited, in shallow graves, with an utterly unprotective covering, of a few inches of soil (chiefly compounded of human remains) over each coffin. That your petitioners beg to remind your Honourable House, that the practice of intramural burial, in itself so injurious and demoralising, is rendered incalculably more injurious and destructive by the systematic employment of means for the purpose of providing space for new comers. That the mischiefs thus inflicted upon the living are incalculably increased by the mutilation and disturbance of bodies previously interred, and also by the incessant turning up of human remains, in every stage of decomposition. That your petitioners have abundant evidence to prove, that in London, Bristol, Waterford, and other places, some of the most virulent and fatal cases of recent cholera were developed in the immediate neighbourhood of

burial places. That your petitioners respectfully suggest that, although the mistakes of centuries, as to the insanitary construction of the habitations of the living, and the sewerage of cities and towns, can be rectified only by necessarily slow degrees, and at an enormous pecuniary outlay,—the immediate arrestation of the practice of intramural burial,—a practice which admits of neither palliation nor excuse, is as easy as it is urgent and imperative. That for the above and other cogent reasons, your petitioners respectfully call upon your Honourable House to interpose your authority—to accord a power to step in between the living and the dead—and to pass, forthwith, a GENERAL ACT for the formation of NATIONAL CEMETERIES, far removed from human dwellings. And your petitioners will ever pray, &c. GEORGE ALFRED WALKER, Surgeon, President. 17, New Bridge-street, Blackfriars, Feb. 11, 1850.”

(E.) I think it necessary to inform my readers that these remarks are a reprint of my “PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS for the ESTABLISHMENT of NATIONAL CEMETERIES,” published in the year 1849. A strong conviction of the necessity of the case, and a belief that I might render a service by their republication, has alone induced me again to take up the subject. I have neither the inclination nor the space at present to wade through the mass of “Reports” which have been subsequently issued; but I may remark, that already precious irredemable time has been lost which the people had a right to expect should have been employed in energetic action. Instead of wasting time and money in arbitration, which has eventuated in a sum of £117,000 being awarded for the Nunhead and Brompton Cemeteries, which sum the Treasury has declined to advance; those to whom the power of providing an efficient remedy for a grievous and hourly increasing wrong has been delegated, ought to have opened forthwith cemeteries sufficiently capacious to receive the dead of the metropolis for centuries to come. And here let me observe, that not only the *dead of the FUTURE*, but the generations of the *PAST*, demand our care and solicitude.

Myriads of bodies piled one upon another in the vaults of our churches and chapels, which have been during centuries converted into charnel-houses, are furnishing their quota to the general mischief. Thousands of those whose bodies have been so disposed of have not a single living representative. If, after due official notice, they were unclaimed, what sentiment could reasonably be offended if a solemn and appropriate transmission were accorded them by funereal trains to a cemetery. Having myself personally superintended the exhumation and removal of many thousand bodies from the cellar under ENON CHAPEL, Clement’s-lane, Strand, in the years 1847-8, I am fairly entitled to express my opinion that what has been done by an individual, alone, and unassisted, may be accomplished by an imperially constituted authority. This undertaking was effected without any accident, and four up-heaped van loads of human remains found Christian burial in the Norwood Cemetery, whilst an enormous quantity of coffin wood, from the same place, was consumed by fire at Sydenham. I mention these circumstances in order that I may place on record a remarkable fact—*viz.*, that although upwards of 6,000 persons visited this wretched receptacle during the time it was in my possession, and although I am acquainted with many who had placed relatives and friends there, yet only *one* person made any inquiry concerning one body, out of the many thousands there deposited.

(F.) If early morning trains were appointed, either on the before-named, or on alternate days, many advantages would result. The nuisance of crowded funeral processions has been felt to be so injurious and so intolerable as to call forth the strongest marks of reprobation from hundreds of citizens representing the wealth, rank, and intelligence of the City of Dublin, as is evidenced by a requisition to the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor and the Town Council, published in the *Dublin Daily Express*, of Dec. 3, 1851. The memorial, after alluding to the Dublin Improvement Act,

and condemning in strong terms the mode of conducting funerals in that city, says :—" That the present system is the cause of lavish and useless expense, oftentimes entailing poverty and destitution on the surviving relations of deceased persons. That the occurrence of numerous and lengthy funeral processions through a crowded city causes an interruption and hindrance to the traffic in, and free passage through, the public streets. That your memorialists also beg to impress upon the attention of the Town Council the ruinous depreciation in the value of house property along the routes to the public cemeteries, which has been caused by the continual passing of funeral processions. From these considerations, your memorialists respectfully suggest that no funeral processions be permitted to pass along the streets and thoroughfares of the city, save between the hours of six and nine o'clock, a.m., in summer, and six and ten o'clock, a.m., in winter, unless during the prevalence of epidemics, or in the case of the public funerals of distinguished persons. And your memorialists, in conclusion, beg to state, that from the knowledge that every member of your Council is deeply anxious for the improvement of the city, the welfare of our citizens, and the amelioration of their moral, social, and sanitary condition, they entertain the full assurance that your honourable Council will afford to this Memorial that attentive consideration which the urgency of the case and the interests involved require, and promptly apply those remedies which justice and prudence dictate." If, in Dublin, where the necessity is much less imperative and urgent, mid-day funerals are so injurious and objectionable, how much longer shall we, in this overgrown metropolis, submit to follow, blindly, a wretched and superstitious practice, which measures grief by "inky cloaks"—"customary suits of solemn black," and the long-drawn and slow-paced array of the staid and serious-looking men who "perform" our funerals?
